

EXHIBIT 94

consistent strength out of a potential weakness. Gene Colan created stop and stare work that never forced the reader into either.

Many feel that Colan's masterwork is his long run on *Tomb of Dracula* with Marv Wolfman, from 1972 to 1979. While there's excellent work to be found throughout the cartoonist's career — from his first stint with Martin Goodman's comics company through his reliable, sometimes stunning work on second-tier Marvel characters including a few Black Widow adventures that may have pushed an entire generation of male comics readers into puberty, into *Night Force* at DC and any number of admirable, non-super-hero projects that came in the 1980's and 1990's like *Ragamuffins* and *Nathaniel Dusk* — it's revisiting Colan's take on the Dracula mythos that I think provides the greatest thrills. Very few artists could walk the thin line between the hideous and the charismatic as Colan could, and even fewer have been able to find something sad and broken in traditional attractiveness, a quality with which Colan imbued the title's heroes and heroines. Colan's work with light and shadow was never better than on *Tomb*; it gave his work a depth that pushed the hopelessness of the various situations presented out of the foreground and into the wider world behind it. There's a relentlessness that Colan taps into on that comic that's as impressive a feat as any American comic illustrator's: every single moment of horror or foreboding suggests a shadow behind with its own dank, awful secret. When he shifts from solid form into mist, Colan's Dracula rarely slips away but tends to fill the room with his presence, corner to corner. The visual rhythm is full of changes of direction and the primary relationship motif is of one person lunging at or enveloping another person, covering them. Colan created a comic of despair and exhaustion that stops just short of our needing to put it down.

Comics can be a demeaning business for even the best artists, as commercial demands and stylistic fads can cut into the finest intentions for personal expression and make things tougher for those who enjoy the applications of craft. Gene Colan was among a handful of truly distinctive, constantly working artists in an era that featured cookie-cutter production to a degree that was remarkable even by comics industry standards. His presence on the spinner racks was a constant reminder to fans that any number of creative choices can be made to work on the comics page. Many artists that found purchase in that arena and still find it today owe the fundamentals of their introduction into the eyes and minds of their audiences to a man that went there first, so stylishly, so smartly and in such an understated fashion despite talent as to humble us all.

THE GENE COLAN INTERVIEW

By Clifford Meth — June 17, 1995



big chance I took. Stan thought I was nuts. He said, "You could have told this whole damn thing in two or three panels!" But it turned out that the story met with a lot of approval. The fans loved it. I think it was the first time it was done. It turned out to be a good thing.

METH: Favorite inker?

COLAN: My favorite inker was absolutely Al Williamson. He inked me over *Wolverine*, some horror stuff, and the latest version of *Dracula*... Also, right up there is Tom Palmer. We did *Tomb of Dracula* together for thirteen years. Tom is an excellent inker. His work reminded me a lot of Caniff's work, but Tom was even better in certain ways.

METH: Do you have a favorite writer?

COLAN: Yes—Steve Gerber was one of the best writers that I ever worked with. Also Don McGregor.

METH: The lion's share of your work was super-hero books, but many fans regard you as a horror artist.

COLAN: I loved the horror books. That's what seeing "Frankenstein" did to me. I just love to be scared. I would stand outside of the movie theater when I was a kid before going to a Saturday afternoon matinee. I couldn't get up the nerve to go in by myself. I was so afraid, standing out there going, "Should I or shouldn't I?" But I loved them—I just loved them. And I loved drawing them.

METH: Many of the artists who came after you have acknowledged your influence on their work, and on the genre. Do you feel appreciated?

COLAN: I can't believe it, really. I don't look upon myself as anything special. There were a lot of artists who were much better than I was... When I started, I had two things in view. Only two. I wanted to have fame—I really did. I knew I wasn't going to be an actor, but my goal was to be the best in comics that I could be. But it's funny, because even when I received fan mail, I always thought it was for somebody else. You get so involved with what you're doing that you only see what you're doing—you don't see much else. It's like when you're heading home, you know you're walking in the street, but your mind is elsewhere. In a certain sense, you're *not* seeing—you're only seeing what you're thinking. That's what happened with me. I never thought all that much about the money. I never thought I'd be rich in this business, or that I'd drive around in a Cadillac or a Mercedes, although at one time I did have a Cadillac. It was stolen. But anyway, I never thought about the money in the beginning—I just wanted to get into the business and be somebody. I didn't care for advertising art. I wanted to tell stories. I

wanted to believe I was a movie maker. It was as close as I was going to get to directing film.

METH: Any regrets?

COLAN: Sometimes I wish I'd gone into film, but looking at the industry, I don't think I'd have lasted more than a month. It would have buried me. I've had fifty years in comics. I've earned a decent living. And I've loved every minute of it.

